



MDCR/MCRC E-newsletter for March 30, 2015

[Civil rights group recommends outside prosecutors review fatal Ann Arbor police shooting](#)

From MLive, 3/30

Why did one Ann Arbor police officer pull a Taser and the other officer a gun as 40-year-old Aura Rosser confronted them with a knife?

[Commission proposes ordinance against LGBT bias at work](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/29

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission unveiled last week an ordinance template for cities and townships across the state to use to protect members of the LGBT community from discrimination.

[Grand Haven community gathers to discuss race, bias at annual Diversity Alliance Summit](#)

From MLive, 3/29

A summit on race and inclusion drew approximately 700 people this weekend, opening doors to discuss topics on business, community, education, faith, government and health.

[Report: Federal judge who was shot in Detroit to speak at anti-violence march on Good Friday](#)

From MLive, 3/29

DETROIT – U.S. District Judge Terrence Berg suffered a gunshot to his leg during a struggle with two would-be home invaders outside his Detroit home March 9.

[Diversity is the fruit of planning](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/28

Here's one of the paradoxes of today's Detroit.

[David Meador: The autism crisis and Michigan](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 3/28

International Autism Awareness Day is Thursday, April 2. I call it a crisis, but why? With no known cause or cure, autism impacts 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys, (in Michigan) and the incidence rate continues to increase at an alarming rate.

[Tribes See Name on Oregon Maps as Being Out of Bounds](#)

From the New York Times, 3/28

Grant County, a mountainous patch of eastern Oregon, has few Native Americans, but maps point to a different past, marking a spring, a rock, three meadows and several creeks with "squaw" in their names.

[Ken Braun: Rep. Gary Glenn has a big box of pink triangles](#)

From MLive, 3/28

The pink triangle symbol of the gay rights movement is well-known as an appropriation of the badge used in concentration camps to identify homosexual prisoners. As notoriously demonstrated by the pair of inverted yellow triangles used to tag Jews, the Third Reich deployed an elaborate system of colored triangles to cross-identify its hostages by enemy races, religions, nationalities, sexual practices, and much else. Infamously obsessed with human differences, they even had a specific insignia for Jewish "race defilers" who had the temerity to sleep with a non-Jew.

[Susan J. Demas: Surprise! 'Religious freedom' bills are anti-business](#)

From MLive, 3/28

I'm not sure that anyone who supports so-called "religious freedom" legislation really gets how to run a business.

[Racial profiling allegations against state police a concern in Flint, say some community leaders](#)

From MLive, 3/27

GENESEE COUNTY – Some say a lack of diversity among state police troopers is a cause of alleged racial profiling in the city of Flint, and things may be heading in the wrong direction.

[Justices side with ex-UPS worker who claims pregnancy bias](#)

From the Associated Press, 3/26

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is giving a former UPS driver another chance to prove her claim of discrimination after the company did not offer her lighter duty when she was pregnant.

[Lawsuit: Ford wouldn't let disabled vet use service dog](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/26

A former employee is suing Ford Motor Co., alleging the Dearborn automaker wouldn't let him bring his service dog into the transmission plant he worked in.

[Dozens protest rough arrest of man by Inkster police](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/25

Inkster — Tears streamed down Floyd Dent's face Wednesday as he described how Inkster police officers pulled him from his vehicle during a traffic stop captured on patrol car video one late January night and began beating him.

[Michigan House Speaker Kevin Cotter weighs in on gay editor 'agenda alert' by Gary Glenn](#)

From MLive, 3/25

Midland – Michigan's speaker of the House has weighed in on a controversial tweet sent out by Rep. Gary Glenn, R-Larkin Township, in response to his hometown newspaper naming a gay man to the position of news editor.

[Pay equity in Michigan? Wait till 2086](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/25

I will not live to see the day when a woman will make as much money for the same work as a man in Michigan.

[Gay marriage ban costs Michigan tourism industry, says LGBT market researcher](#)

From MLive, 3/24

Grand Rapids – There are 37 states with marriage equality and the fact that Michigan isn't one of them hurts the tourism industry's bottom line, said a market researcher at the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism this week.

[Bill in Colorado restricts use of Indian mascots in public schools](#)

From Indianz.com, 3/24

A bill under consideration in the Colorado Legislature restricts the use of Indian mascots, nicknames and imagery in public schools.

[Rapid worker claims racial discrimination complaint led to firing](#)

From MLive, 3/24

Grand Rapids – A former worker at The Rapid says he was fired after he complained of racial discrimination.

[Model LGBT non-discrimination ordinance adopted by Michigan Civil Rights Commission](#)

From MLive, 3/24

With debate over protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents at a standstill in the Michigan Legislature, the Civil Rights Commission on Monday adopted a model non-discrimination ordinance for local communities to consider.

[Michigan woman sues Planet Fitness for transgender-friendly locker room policy](#)

From MLive, 3/23

The transgender-friendly locker room policy of national gym chain Planet Fitness has led to a lawsuit in Michigan.

[Bigotry not the only way to stop adoptions](#)

From the Times Herald, 3/23

Newspaper editorial writers often are challenged to find something nice to say about the Michigan legislature. Often, we agree with our readers that lawmakers are paid too much, work too little and on what is too often wrong-headed.

[High court considers impact of disability law on police](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/23

Washington — The Supreme Court is considering whether the Americans With Disabilities Act requires police to take special precautions when trying to arrest armed and violent suspects who are mentally ill.

[Funding for police training in jeopardy in Michigan](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/23

Livonia — The number of cops on the beat across the state has taken a hit and so has funding for continued training after they graduate from the academy.

[On immigration, is Michigan on wrong side of history?](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/23

The recent news of a federal judge halting President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration grows out of a lawsuit filed by 26 states, led by Texas, seeking an injunction against the Department of Homeland Security's program of deferred action. Under this program two categories of unlawfully present immigrants (those brought in as children, and the parents of U.S. citizens) would not be placed into deportation proceedings and would be authorized to legally work in the U.S. Michigan Attorney

General Bill Schuette joined this lawsuit on behalf of the people of Michigan. In adding his name, and ours, Schuette puts us on the wrong side.

[Black troopers disappearing from Michigan State Police](#)

From the LSJ/DFP, 3/22

LANSING – Twenty-two years after it was freed from federal oversight for failing to hire enough blacks, women and other minorities, the Michigan State Police has relapsed into a department overwhelmingly dominated by white males.

[Michigan receives \\$5.5M to provide rental assistance](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/21

LANSING – Michigan is receiving more than \$5.5 million in grant funding for providing rental housing assistance to extremely-low income people with disabilities.

[Viola Liuzzo to receive posthumous degree from Wayne St.](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/21

For 24 years, a stone marker has stood along U.S. 80 in Alabama near the spot where Viola Gregg Liuzzo was fatally shot by Klansmen while shuttling demonstrators after the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march.

[Finley: Remember the '67 riot](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/20

I was on hand Thursday when the Detroit Historical Museum announced its plans to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit riot with a major exhibition. It's a big, ambitious idea, one that could put the museum on the national map.

[Saturday Shorts: More jury diversity](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/20

Rep. Brian Banks, D-Harper Woods, has introduced legislation that would expand the sources from which court officials could obtain the names of potential jurors.

[First gay couple married in Michigan join Democrats proposing 'marriage equality' bills](#)

From MLive, 3/19

Marsha Caspar and Glenna DeJong, the first gay couple legally married in Michigan, will celebrate their one-year anniversary on Sunday.

[Former MSU basketball player shares story of disability with local students](#)

From WNDU, 3/19

Students at Union High School in Dowagiac were in for a treat on Thursday afternoon when a former Michigan State basketball star stopped by for a chat.

From Grand Rapids Legal News, 3/19: <http://legalnews.com/grandrapids/1403162/> (see first article about the Hispanic/Latino Commission)

[The bizarre hurry to preserve discrimination in Michigan](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/19

If it weren't driven by such animus, the scurrying effort in the Legislature to pre-emptively punch holes in equal-protection opportunities for gay Michiganders would be quite entertaining.

[Lesbian mom calls firing from Marian High 'sad'](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/19

Piper Joy Lasecki-Webb, born on March 3, will likely enjoy a lot of opportunities in life.

[What's white privilege? Dozens attend Kalamazoo workshop to talk about it](#)

From MLive, 3/19

White privilege is not about guilt, said Gail Griffin, who headed Wednesday's workshop on white privilege at Kalamazoo College.

[Former MSU basketball player shares story of disability with local students](#)

From WNDU, 3/19

Students at Union High School in Dowagiac were in for a treat on Thursday afternoon when a former Michigan State basketball star stopped by for a chat.

[Justice goes to prison to weigh Mich. sentencing system](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/19

Jackson — On an early March tour of Michigan's prison intake center, new Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein learned that corrections officials want more guidance from judges about their expectations for the lawbreakers sent here.

[Prayer at charter school stopped after civil rights complaint](#)

From MLive, 3/18

KENT COUNTY – A civil rights group says a complaint it made to a Byron Center-area charter school stopped two adults from unlawfully leading students in Christian prayer on campus.

[SMART lets discrimination battle end with ex-mechanic](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/18

Just after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S., someone attached a picture of a terrorist to SMART bus mechanic Mazyn Barash's time card.

[Livonia first stop on MI Hidden Talent Tour](#)

From Hometown Life/O&E Media, 3/17

Lt. Gov. Brian Calley and Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein have announced a partnership to highlight the opportunities for hiring Michiganders with disabilities across the state and their first stop will be in Livonia.

[5th grade student's sexual harassment suspensions draw lawsuit, civil rights claim](#)

From MLive, 3/13

GRAND RAPIDS – A fifth-grader's suspension for alleged sexual harassment has led his mother to sue Grand Rapids Public Schools, accusing the district of failing to properly investigate the claim and give the child a chance to prove his innocence.

[Nursing supervisor loses discrimination case in white patient's care at Mary Free Bed](#)

From MLive, 3/13

A judge dismissed a lawsuit filed by a black nursing supervisor who said she was not allowed to care for a white patient at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital because his family requested no black caregivers.

[Schuetz announces same-sex marriage legal team](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/13

WASHINGTON – Former Michigan Solicitor General John Bursch, who argued eight cases before the U.S. Supreme Court between 2011 and 2013, is being brought back as a special assistant attorney general to argue the state's defense of a same-sex marriage ban before the court next month.

[When Government Takes a Life](#)

From City Pulse, 3/11

Police departments, whatever their size, are at their core paramilitary organizations governed by rules and regulations, policies and procedures. As such, it would seem reasonable to assume when dealing with the gravest of all police actions — the shooting and death of a citizen — there would be clearly defined steps on releasing information, particularly the names of the officer involved.

[Jewish Community Center in Oak Park may close its doors](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/10

The boards of two Jewish groups have voted to shut down the Jewish Community Center in Oak Park by the end of August, drawing criticism from some who feel the area is being abandoned.

[New Recommendations On Changing Policing Within Communities](#)

From WDET's Detroit Today, 3/10 (this is an audio clip)

Co-hosts Sandra Svoboda and Saeed Khan discuss community policing efforts and how they have been changing. They are joined by the Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights Mike Wesaw, and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan Barbara McQuade. Together they examine the relationship between police and communities that is 21st century policing.

[Program in Michigan seeks to build trust between police and communities](#)

From Michigan Radio's Stateside, 3/10 (this is an audio clip)

Peaceful protests continued through the weekend in Madison, Wisconsin, after an unarmed black teenager was killed by a white police officer Friday night.

It's the latest conflict between police and the communities they protect.

In Michigan, the state's Department of Civil Rights is working around the state to try to build trust between police and the communities they work in.

[Transgender teen's acceptance an act of love for family](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/10

Roz Keith's first inkling that her youngest child, the one who never liked frilly dresses or girly things, might be different came about eight years ago.

[Ferguson is not an exception, it's the norm](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/9

By now, it should come as news to no one that Ferguson, Missouri, has a lousy excuse for a police department.

[Judge tosses Dave Agema's suit after self-professed ex-Muslim terrorist's speech shut down](#)

From MLive, 3/9

ALLEGAN – A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit against Allegan Public Schools after police shut down a self-professed ex-Muslim terrorist's speech at the high school over safety concerns.

[From Selma to Flint: Genesee County residents march to commemorate 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday"](#)

From MLive, 3/9

Leo Jackson was 15 years old when he walked a 10-mile segment of the 1965 march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery.

[Detroit police diversity issues predate national debate](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/8

Amid a national debate about the relationship between African-American communities and mostly white police departments, Detroit is in a better position than most when it comes to having a diverse police force.

[Free Press writer and others pedal historic route](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/8

I got off the bus full of bikers in downtown Selma, grabbed my bike and walked to the area where cyclists had begun to gather.

[People with disabilities want appropriate accommodations](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/8

My column last Sunday about Jerry Wolffe and his fight for the rights of those with disabilities garnered many similar stories from readers.

[Database: Search disability information by county](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/8

About 12.7% of Michigan residents 18 to 64 years old reported a disability in 2013, higher than the national rate of 10.5%, census data show.

[Northern Michigan University, campus paper face off](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/8

Marquette — When the student newspaper at Northern Michigan University looked into the school's relationship with Starbucks, it didn't find anything earth-shattering.

[Civil rights milestone marked by first black president](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/7

Selma, Ala. — America's racial history "still casts its long shadow upon us," the nation's first black president said Saturday as he stood in solidarity and remembrance with civil rights activists whose beatings by police a half-century ago galvanized people against racial oppression and hastened passage of historic voting rights for minorities.

[Movement could land Rosa Parks on the \\$20 bill](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/7

Could the face of civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks be the first woman and first African American to be featured on a piece of American paper currency?

[Lawsuit alleging abuse by U.S. agents settled for \\$50K](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/7

GRAND RAPIDS – The federal government has agreed to pay \$50,000 to settle a lawsuit that accused immigration agents of abusing a Hispanic woman and her son in Grand Rapids.

[Kalamazoo College students rally over concerns about racism, push for intercultural center](#)

From MLive, 3/7

KALAMAZOO – The Kalamazoo College Board of Trustees and administrators on Saturday heard from about 100 students who expressed concerns about marginalization, racism and safety at the college and made a case for creation of an intercultural center on campus.

[Autism advocate Temple Grandin: 'Old-fashioned '50s parenting' can help kids](#)

From MLive, 3/6

GRAND RAPIDS – Temple Grandin, a professor and author who has autism, called for a bit of old-fashioned 1950s-style parenting to teach social skills and help children develop their talents.

Milliken, Former AG Mike Cox Sign Brief Supporting Marriage Equality

From Gongwer, 3/6

Former Governor William Milliken and former Attorney General Mike Cox are among about 12 new signatures associated with an amicus brief from now more than 300 Republicans nationwide urging the Supreme Court to support same-sex marriage in a case expected to have oral arguments late next month.

Last June, some 25 or so Republicans, mostly former legislators, submitted an amicus brief to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for consideration (See Gongwer Michigan Report, June 17, 2014), urging that body to uphold a lower court ruling that deemed Michigan's ban on same-sex marriage as unconstitutional. Among those signatories were Jennifer Gratz, who is most closely associated with spearheading the state's ban on affirmative action; former House Speaker Rick Johnson and his then-chief of staff, Todd Anderson (who is now a director of public policy for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan); former Rep. and Sen. Dave Honigman; and longtime GOP political operative Richard McLellan.

Ultimately, that court would uphold the ban on same-sex marriage, issuing a ruling just two days after the election this past November (See Gongwer Michigan Report, November 6, 2014). The decision split from a vast array of federal courts nationally that had largely ruled bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional.

Late Thursday, Time magazine and others reported that more than 300 Republicans or Republican-affiliated individuals ranging from former GOP leaders and legislators to mega-donor David Koch had signed on to a newer amicus brief prepared for the U.S. Supreme Court, calling on it to recognize same-sex marriage nationally.

The GOP brief comes a day after Democrats from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee (which make up the 6th circuit) joined together to file a brief expressing their support for a ruling in favor of same-sex marriage.

And there were some notable Michigan names on the new brief, including former Governor William Milliken, former Attorney General Mike Cox, former Michigan Republican Party Chair David Doyle and former U.S. Ambassador to Italy Peter and Joan Secchia (also a former national committeeman and a former trustee for Aquinas College, respectively). The Secchias are not named as frequently as the

DeVos family when it comes to being a primary GOP donor, but they wield similar influence, especially in West Michigan.

Former Rep. Edward Gaffney, former House Speaker Chuck Perricone, former director of the Department of Labor Keith Molin, Mike and Sue Jandernoa (board member for Business Leaders for Michigan and board member for the Michigan Health Endowment Board, respectively), Jim Murray (now the president of AT&T Michigan) and Sarah Anderson, a former communications and research director for the Michigan Republican Party, also pledged their support.

A statement by Project Right Side, a group which appears to represent conservatives supporting marriage equality, indicated that the signatories wanted to convey to the Supreme Court that "they support traditional conservative values, including the belief in the importance of stable families, as well as the commitment to limited government and the protection of individual freedom. Furthermore they believe that those conservative values are consistent with affording civil marriage rights to same-sex couples," the group said.

And the court has repeatedly held marriage to be a fundamental right, it said.

"This historic brief adds an important and different voice in the struggle for marriage equality both before the court and also to millions of Americans at a 'teaching moment,'" said Ken Mehlman, former Republican National Committee chair and the group's leader, said. "It is another reflection of the growing national support for freedom and liberty for gay and lesbian Americans - support that clearly crosses partisan and ideological lines."

All told, the group said the amici spanned 33 states and included past presidential candidates, seven current and former governors, 23 current and former members of the U.S. House and Senate, and scores of former state legislators.

For Mr. Cox, he said it comes down to what the courts have ruled in the *United States v. Windsor*, a case in which the U.S. Supreme Court held that restricting the U.S. federal interpretation of "marriage" and "spouse" to apply only to heterosexual unions through a portion of the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional.

"I recognize that there's a very strong religious interest in marriage, and that's been the case for centuries, but ... (in that case) the court really moved the needle toward marriage as a fundamental right," he said.

Mr. Cox said he sometimes gets some criticism about whether he is still a social conservative, but he said this case is not about that.

"It's about greater self-determination for individuals to make the choices for themselves even if I don't support them," he said.

Mr. Cox noted that he is still opposed to abortions because they involve an institution and would support religious freedom mandate alongside any potential expansion of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. He acknowledged that some may see hypocrisy in his support for a religious freedom mandate alongside support for same-sex civil marriage, but

reiterated that the case at hand is about "adults and giving them the greatest degree of individual liberty possible," he said.

[Saginaw to Selma: Sisters to attend 50th anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday' march](#)

From MLive, 3/5

SAGINAW – Bloody Sunday is a day seared into the memories of many civil rights activists. It's a dark chapter in American history and a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act.

[Wife of Central Michigan University president recalls family helping Selma civil rights marchers 50 years ago](#)

From MLive, 3/4

MT. PLEASANT – Elizabeth Ross, the wife of Central Michigan University President George Ross, was a teenager in Alabama in 1965 when civil rights marchers walking from Selma to Montgomery stopped to rest at her family's farm.

[Taylor City Council votes to 'Take On Hate'](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/4

In recent weeks, Rashida Tlaib has been dismayed by what she calls "an alarming increase in hateful statements about Muslims and reaction towards them."

[The fight against colorism in the black community](#)

From WDIV, 3/4

You might not have heard of the term colorism, but it's a problem in the black community. African-Americans are discriminating against each other, pitting those with lighter skin against ones whose skin is darker.

[A Chilling Portrait of Ferguson](#)

From the New York Times, 3/4

The riots that erupted in Ferguson, Mo., last summer after a white police officer shot and killed an unarmed black teenager named Michael Brown were partly about his death. They were also deeply connected to a lamentable history of abuse suffered by African-American citizens at the hands of local police and court officials.

[Rep. says pediatrician case shows need for civil rights protection](#)

From C&G Newspapers, 3/4

ROSEVILLE — After a Roseville-based pediatrician turned away a lesbian couple and their baby last October, state Rep. John Chirkun, D-Roseville, said that the incident showed how important it is for the state to expand its civil rights protections to include gay and transgender people.

[Same-sex marriage brief attracts 200,000 signatures](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/3

WASHINGTON — More than 200,000 people have signed a legal brief headed to the U.S. Supreme Court this week arguing for same-sex marriage bans in Michigan and other states to be overturned.

[Why Grand Rapids may change 'gender orientation' language in non-discrimination ordinance](#)

From MLive, 3/3

As East Grand Rapids moves toward becoming the second city in Kent County to put LGBT protections in a non-discrimination ordinance, the first local city with such language on the books also is looking at making a change.

[Same-sex marriage: Why people really oppose it](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 3/2

Why do you oppose same-sex marriage?

[Lansing-area men played key role in civil rights movement](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 3/2

OKEMOS – The night before John Duley and Dr. Robert Green arrived in Selma, a Unitarian minister from Boston was beaten so badly that he died in a hospital two days later.

[3 school bus drivers file gender discrimination lawsuit](#)

From the Detroit News, 3/2

Escanaba — Three Upper Peninsula school bus drivers say in a gender discrimination lawsuit that their buses showed signs of tampering.

[Guest column: Black history extends back to the beginning of the human race, needs to be celebrated all year](#)

From MLive, 2/28

Carter G. Woodson founded Negro History Week in February, 1926.

[Remove Unfair Barriers to Employment](#)

From the New York Times, 2/27

About 70 million Americans have criminal histories that may prevent them from ever finding a job, even for arrests or minor convictions that occurred in the distant past. Fourteen states and about 100 cities and counties have tried to help by barring public agencies — and in some instances, private businesses — from asking job candidates about criminal convictions until later in the application process, when they have had a chance to prove their qualifications. These measures help, but federal action is needed to ensure that people with criminal convictions are not unfairly walled off from the job market.

[Owosso teen with autism touched by Ianni's similar story](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 2/27

OWOSSO – Candie Page randomly picked up a copy of the Lansing State Journal and read a familiar story.